

A Prayer entitled “Lockdown”

The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked.
(John 20.19)

Ever present God,
be with us in our isolation,
be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness,
be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness,
be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,
that when the doors reopen
we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness to an emerging world
For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

A prayer from the evening service of Compline.

Be with us, merciful God, and protect us
through the silent hours of this night;
that we, who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,
may rest upon your eternal changelessness.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



- **The benefice website:** www.thepaxtonsbenefice.org
- **The benefice Facebook page:**
www.facebook.com/ThePaxtonsBenefice

PAGE FOUR.

Sunday March 29th, 2020: The 5th Sunday in Lent. The benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe “Keeping in Touch” – Edition No:1

Hello everyone and greetings from the Vicarage!

This is the first of what I hope will be a weekly newsletter helping us all to keep in touch during these strange and unwelcome days of social distancing. I hope you and your families are all well and are coping with the many restrictions we are negotiating in his strange new world.

It feels that we have gone very quickly from curtailing the use of the chalice at Holy Communion and no longer shaking hands at the peace, to having to stay at home unless it is absolutely necessary to venture outside. Our church buildings are out of bounds – but as church is of course about people and relationships and faith – church in a very real sense is very much alive.

I do hope that you all have someone at least who can help you if you need assistance with shopping, collecting prescriptions etc but please do give me a ring if you or someone you know is struggling.

Not everyone is online, uses email and social media such as Facebook, so we hope this leaflet will reach those who appreciate the written word on paper. If you think you know someone who would like a copy, please do print one off and post it through their door.

I’m delighted that Nick Gellatly has written some reflections for this first edition, to which I shall add some prayers and links to our social media sites. There is also an attachment with a short address I prepared for Sunday’s You Tube service based on Ezekiel Chapter 37 v 1-14. If anyone would like to contribute to these leaflets, please do let me know by email – prayers, poems, short reflections are all welcome.

Keep safe and well. Our thanks to Anita Bailey, the Little Paxton PCC Secretary for keeping the secure data base of emails.

With love and prayers from Annette at St James Vicarage
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PAGE ONE

Nick Gellatly writes:

An Isolated Rainbow

Like many others at the moment, I'm self-isolating - though maybe social distancing is a better description as I am completely symptom free. To be honest, I have been doing a bit of that for a year or so since experiencing a PTSD inducing series of events. Covid-19 has brought legitimacy to my withdrawal from 'social' life which part of me welcomes.

A lot has changed. I'm out of touch with people I have known for a long time. Not least at St James and among friends whom I owe a contact but to whom I have felt unable to reach out.

Don't get me wrong, I'm quite content. I cycle, I go to work and generally enjoy a quiet and simple life. In fact, I am a member of the Spare Tyres Cycling Club where I enjoy solitary trips with (or more specifically, without) fellow solo cyclists. (Not to be confused with uni-cyclists)

And now, I'm working at home which suits me well. It has only been a few days but I'm into a good routine and I still use my bike to commute to work. From the back gate to the back gate via Hail Weston quite early in the morning (my daily episode of government approved exercise).

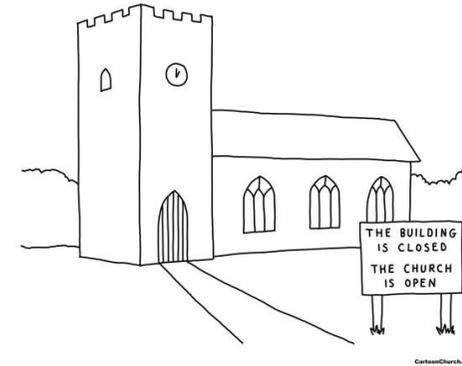
This morning I noticed, in the window of a home across from my gate, a picture drawn by one of the children there. It was a rainbow. I like rainbows. To me, they are a symbol of hope. Hope that sunshine will follow the rain, hope for peace, hope that each of us will treat others generously.

Over lunch I was catching up on the papers and noticed an article. It said that 'Front windows ... are filling up with rainbows as children help to spread a cheerful message.' One teacher said, 'We thought this would be a really visual way of bringing hope at a time when there is not much out there. It also sends a message ... to say we are thinking of you ...'. We are thinking of you. That is an important message. We can't always be present for the things we once did or would like to do. Particularly at this unique and unusual time.

PAGE TWO

But we can think of one another and show such kindness as we are able. I'm going to pop a card through the door of the rainbow's artist tomorrow to say thank you, your drawing means a lot to me. Thank you for thinking of me.

And in turn, I'm thinking of you, I hope you stay well and take care of yourself and your loved ones remembering that the rainbow symbolises hope of better times to come
Nick.



Tonight, before falling asleep
think about when we shall return to the street.

When we shall hug again.

When all the shopping together will seem like a party.
Let's think about when the coffees will return to the bar,
the small talk, the photos close to each other.

We think about when it will all be a memory, but normality will seem an
unexpected and beautiful gift.

We will love everything that has so far seemed futile to us.

Every second will be precious.

Swims in the sea, the sun until late, sunsets, toasts, laughter.

We will go back to laughing together.

Strength and courage!

Anon.

PAGE THREE

